WHO ARE
THE
AHLAS SUNNAT
WAL JAMAAT?
By
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PART 1

We express delight that we belong to the Ahlas Sunnat Wal Jamaat. In the term Ahlas Sunnat Wal Jamaat there are two extremely significant words - one 'Sunnat', the other 'Jamaat'. By 'Sunnat' is meant the way or pattern of Our Beloved Nabi Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and by 'Jamaat' is meant the group of Sahabah (R.A.). Thus the people of the Ahlas Sunnat Wal Jamaat are those who are on the way and pattern of Our Nabi (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) as well as being on the path of the Sahabah (R.A.), i.e. the people of the authentic Sunnah and the community!

Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: 'My ummah will be divided into 73 groups, all doomed for the fire except one that will obtain salvation, Sahabah (R.A.) inquired "which will that group be" Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) answered:
"MA ANA ALAHI WA ASHABI" - "that group which is on my way and the way of my Sahabah."

In this hadith the word "MA" is general, which encompasses belief, actions, character, in the social, economical and political arenas of life. This clearly denotes that in the sight of Allah all these various aspects of life will be sanctioned, approved and accepted if these conform to the path shown by Nabi (sallallahu alayhi wasallam)and the Sahabah (R.A.). Furthermore those paths which are not in adherence to the above, irrespective of whether it pertains to belief, action or character will not be the Seeratul Mustaqueem - (the rightly guided and Divinely protected path of Deen).

By 'Sunnat' is meant that way of Deen which has reached us in its original form via the Noble Quran or via any authentic narration. Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: "Hold fast to My Sunnat and the Sunnat of the Khulafaa-e-Rasheedeen" (the Rightly Guided Caliphs). In this hadith two Sunnats are mentioned, one of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and the other of the Sahabah (R.A.). following both are necessary. Sunnat is an intergal part of Deen. It is an essential part of being in the Ahlas Sunnat Wal Jamaat to recognise and accept the Sunnat of Rasulullah (sallallahu allayhi wasallam) and the Sahabah (R.A.). Negation of either one will render one far away from Islam.

Sunnat, as recorded mostly in the Ahadith are the commentary of the lofty Quran. Similarly the spirit of the Sunnat of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) has being clearly displayed in the lives of the Sahabah (R.A.). The pronouncements and actions of the Sahabah (R.A.) have become part of Deen and it is an important factor of Deen. The proof lies clearly in this ayat: "Allah has promised those of you who believe and do

good works to make them successors (over the disbelievers) in the land as He had made their ancestors before them, to strengthen the deen He chose for them, and to change their fear to safety" (Nur - 55).

Although the difference in status between Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and even the highest amongst the Sahabah (R.A.) Hazrat Abu Bakr (R.A.), is extremely vast but the order of following Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) or the Sahabah (R.A.) is the same. We have similar examples in the Mighty Quran like - "Follow Allah and the Rasul" -whilst the difference between Allah and the Rasul (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) is self - evident and well known but the order of following their orders is the same.

To substantiate the fact that one has to follow the path as shown to us by Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and the Sahabah (R.A.), the next 4 sections are sufficient for any honest seeker of the Haqq (Truth).

The first section contains ayaats from the Noble Quran to prove that Allah clearly commands us to follow the Sunnat of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam).

The second section comprises of ayaats of the Lofty Quran explaining to us that the actions of Nabi (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) are divinely inspired and are sanctioned by Allah and this undoubtedly disproves the rejection of hadith.

The third section contains those ayats proving caterogically that the Sahabah (R.A.) are a criterion for right and wrong.

The fourth section lists a few ahadith of the Divinely Inspired Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) proving that the Sahabah (R.A.) are a criterion for right and wrong.

Section One

CONCERNING ADHERENCE TO THE SUNNAT ALLAH SAYS:

1. "O Muslims, obey Allah and the Rasul and those in authority from among you" (4:59);
2. "O Muslims, respond to Allah and His Rasul when he calls you to that which gives you life" (8:24);
3. "O Muslims, obey Allah and His Rasul and **Turn Not Away** (from him), when you hear (him speak)" (8:20);
4. "Whoever obeys the Rasul, he indeed obeys Allah" (4:30);
5. "And whatever the Rasul Gives you, accept it and whatever he **Forbids** you, **Abstain** (from it)" (59:7);

6. "Certainly you have in the Rasul of Allah a beautiful pattern (of conduct) for him who hopes in Allah and in the last day and remembers Allah much" (33:21);
7. "Nor does he say of his own desires, it is naught but wahy (revelation) that is revealed" (53:3-4).

The above clearly proves the necessity of following Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). Ayaats substantiating that the actions of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) are approved and accepted are listed below.

Section Two

RASULULLAH (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) IS DIVINELY INSPRIED

1. "Your companion is neither gone astray nor is he misled nor does he say of (his own) desire. It is but (wahy) revelation sent down to him. He was taught by One Mighty in Power" (53:2-5);
2. "And We have sent down unto thee the message, that you may explain clearly to men what is sent for them, and they may give thought (16:44);
3. "If you obey him (the Rasul) you shall be on Right guidance. The Rasul's duty is only to preach the clear (message)" (24:54);
4. "And whoever contends with the Rasul even after guidance has been plainly conveyed to him, and follows a path other than that becoming the men of Faith, we shall leave him in the path he has chosen and cast him in Jahannum, an evil refuge" (4:115);
5. "It is not fitting for a Believer, man or woman, when a matter has been decided by Allah and His Rasul, to have any option about their decision. If anyone disobeys Allah and His Rasul, he is indeed on a clearly wrong path" (34:36).
6. "But those who disobey Allah and His Rasul and transgress His limits will be admitted to a fire, to abide therein, and they shall have a humiliating punishment" (4:14);
7. "Verily those who swear fealty unto you, only swear fealty unto Allah, the hand of Allah is over their hands" (48:10);
8. "Ah, by your Rabb, they shall not believe until they made you Judge of that which is disputed among them, and then find no vexation in their hearts with that which you have decreed, and they submit with full submission" (4:65);
9. "Say if you Love Allah, then walk in my footsteps and (then) Allah will love you" (3:31);
10. "Verily in the Rasul of Allah you have a excellent example for him who believed in Allah and the Last Day and remembered Allah much" (33:21);

Section Three

THE SAHABAH (R.A.) ARE A CRITERION OF RIGHT AND WRONG: QURANIC PROOF

The Sahabah (R.A.) are a criterion of right and wrong; Haqq (truth) and baatil (falsehood). Allah, the All-Knowing has approved of their actions and is pleased with them.

The underlying ayaats adequately prove the above.

1. "You are the best community which has been raised for (the benefit and reformation) of mankind" (3:110);
2. "Thus We have appointed you as a middle nation, that you may be witnesses against mankind" (2:143);
4. "Those who believed and left their homes and strove for the cause of Allah, and those (Ansar) who took them (the Muhajireen) in (i.e. accomodated them) - those are the Believers in truth. For them is pardon and a bountiful provision" (Sura Anfaal - 74);
5. "But the Rasul and those who believe with him strive with their wealth and their lives. Such are they for whom are the good things, (Jannat), such are they who will prosper" (9:88)

See also Surahs (Hadeed, 10; Tahreem, 8; Fatah, 29; Taubah, 100; Fathah, 26)

Section Four

THE SAHABAH (R.A.) ARE THE CRITERION FOR RIGHT AND WRONG - AHADITH PROOF

We record a few ahadith of the Divinely Inspired Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) which prove that the way of Sahaabah (R.A.) is approved and accepted by Allah.

1. Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) has stated:- "All that befell the children of Israel shall befall my Ummah also. The children of Israel were divided into 72 sects, My ummat shall branch off unto 73 sects, all of which, excepting one millat (which will be the absolved one), will go to Jahannam". The Sahabah (R.A.) asked "which is that millat." The Rasulullah replied: "It is that Millat which follows me and my Sahaabah. (Tirmizi, Vol. 2, P89)
2. "In whichever country any one of my Sahabah is buried, he will rise up upon the Day of Qiyamah as a guide, and as a light for the inhabitants of that country" (Tirmizi, Vol. 2, P.226);
3. "The example of my Sahabah is like that of the stars, whomsoever you follow, you will have received guidance" (Mishkat);

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4. "Of all the eras, mine is of the best, then the period of those who are connected with those of my period. . ." (Bukhari);
5. Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: 'Allah, Most High, cast a glance upon the hearts of His slaves, then He chose Muhammad for Risaalat. Then He cast a glance upon the hearts of His slaves and selected his Companions for him and made them helpers of His Deen and his Ministers. So the work these Muslims (Sahabah) consider as good is also good in the sight of Allah. And the work they consider as bad is also bad in the sight of Allah" (Muatta - P112)

SALIENT FEATURES OF THE AHLAS SUNNAT WAL JAMAAT

Every group claims sole ownership to be carrying the banner of the Ahlas Sunnat Wal Jamaat. Fortunately the Sahabah (R.A.) and the pious predecessors have stipulated certain signs to be sought from any group claiming to be from the Ahlas Sunnat Wal Jamaat.

In Takmela-e-Bahr-u'r Raiq is given the synopsis of a long hadith related by Hazrat Ibn Umar (R.A.) that any one who has in him the following 10 signs, he is of the Ahl-as-Sunnah-Wal Jamaat.

1. He says the 5 time salaat with Jamaat (congregation);
2. He neither speaks ill of any one of the Sahabah (R.A.) nor finds fault with anyone of them,
3. He does not draw his sword against a Muslim Ruler.
4. He does not doubt his own belief (Iman), and he calls himself a true believer and muslim with full faith,
5. He has faith in good or ill fate - that every thing is from Allah;
6. He does not dispute about the Deen of Allah (i.e. he does not argue and philosophise without proof);
7. He does not accuse any monotheist of unbelief (Kufr) on account of a sin;
8. He does not omit the Salaat-e-Janaza of any Ahl-e-Qiblah;
9. He acknowledges the necessity of Masah (passing of wet fingers) over Kuffain (leather socks) on journey and at home;
10. He considers it permissible to say prayers behind any man - virtuous or sinful.

Furthermore Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilani (R.A.) says:-

"The title Ahl-as-Sunnah which the innovaters have claimed for themselves is not appropriate for when, even as the pagans had named our Nabi (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) 'Magician', 'poet', 'madcap', 'the haunted one' and 'soothsayer' (May Allah protect us) although all these names were not at all fit for the great qualities of our Nabi (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). Similarly, the name Ahle Sunnat is not apt for the Ahle-e-Bida. The sign

described by the Shaykh, of the innovaters is that they speak ill of and backbite those who conform to the Hadith and the path of the Sunnah" (Ghunyat-ul-Talibin P. 143).

Moreover when Imam Abu Hanifa (R.A.) was questioned about the Ahlas Sunnat Wal Jamaat, he replied - "The one who acknowledges the superiority of the ShayKhain (i.e. to acknowledge that Abu Bakr and, Umar (R.A.) are superior over all the other Sahabah (R.A.)) - to love Kha'nayain (i.e. to love Uthman and Ali (R.A.)) — to acknowledge the validity of masah on Khuffain (passing of wet hands on leather socks)" this Imam Abu Hanifa (R.A.) extracted from a statement of Hazrat Anas bin Malik (R.A.) (marginal note No. 3 of Quduri P.27)

CONCLUSION

Adherence to the Noble Quran, the Sunnat of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and the way of the Sahabah (R.A.) is necessary for salvation, success and prosperity.

Shaykh Ahmed Rumi (R.A.) says: "By 'absolute sunnah' is meant the Ahlas Sunnat Wal Jamaat who are a people whose mode is the mode of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and the Sahabah (R.A.); it does not mean the innovators and the astray, as the merciful Rasul (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) has said that: "My Ummah is that which adopted my manner" (Majalis ul Abrar P. 131).

Mujuddid-Ali - Thani (R.A.) says:- "There is no doubt, whatsoever that the sect that made conforming to the conduct of the Rasul's companions necessary, that alone is the Ahlas Sunnat Wal Jamaat. May Allah fruitify their efforts (Maktubat-e-Imam Rabbani - Maktub - 80, Vol. 1 -P. 102).

1. Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: "As for what follows next, the best discourse is the Kitaab of Allah and the best guidance is the guidance of Muhammad. The worst of affairs is innovations and every innovation is misleading' (Muslim);
2. "Everyone of my followers will enter Jannat except he who refused. He was questioned: 'And who has refused (the truth)'. He said: whoever, obeys me shall enter Jannat, and whoever disobeys me has refused" (Bukhari);
3. Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said during the Farewell Haj -"and I have left among you a thing which if you adhere to it you will never be misguided after this - the Kitaab of Allah and what you get from me by questions (Hadith)" (Muslim);
4. "He who goes to (a distance of) a hand's breadth away from the Jamaat (united body), has cast off the Rope of Islam from his neck" (Abu Daud);

5. "I leave with you two things - as long as you hold fast to them both, you will never be misguided - the Kitaab of Allah - and the Sunnat of His Rasul" (Muatta).

May Allah grant us the ability to follow in the footsteps of the blessed Shariah. Thus any ibaadat or law proven via the Quran, ahadith and life pattern of Sahabah (R.A.) will be acknowledged, the rest rejected.

> As for the deviated groups, a wise man said:-
> "We heard much about the existence of the Heart in the chest, But when it was cut open, Not even a drop of blood came out"

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